

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 00570 01 OF 02 122223Z

70

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 EB-07 COME-00 FEA-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 STR-04 CEA-01 CIEP-01 FRB-03 AID-05 /098 W

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R 121410Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3550

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0570

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH AGOSTINHO NETO

1. I TALKED ON MAY 10 WITH MPLA PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO ABUT
WAYS TO CONTROL VIOLENCE, MPLA ELECTORAL STRENGTH, U.S. POLICY
TOWARD ANGOLA, NETO'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. AND THE
TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT'S NEW ECONOMIC PROGRAM.

2. NETO SAID THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP TO BE TAKEN NOW IS TO
FIND SOME MEANS TO END THE VIOLENCE THAT PERIODICALLY FLARES UP
AND TERRORIZES THE CITY. AN ANGOLAN ARMY MUST BE CREATED AND
LUANDA MUST BE DEMILITARIZED. THE POLITICAL BATTLE TO GAIN
ADHERENTS WILL AND SHOULD CONTINUE, BUT IT MUST BE DONE
WITHOUT RECOURSE TO VIOLENCE. AS FAR AST THE MPLA IS CONCERNED,
THE MOST URGENT PIECE OF BUSINESS IS ANOTHER SUMMIT AT
WHICH THE PRINCIPAL ITEMS ON THE AGENCA SHOULD BE THE
CREATION OF A SINGLE ANGOLAN ARMY. THERE MUST BE NO RESIDUAL
FORCE OR FORCES WITH A SEPARATE IDENTITY. THIS CONCEPT MUST APPLY
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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00570 01 OF 02 122223Z

TO THE POLICE FORCE AND ANY OTHER SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAY

BE ESTABLISHED, HE ADDED. IF SUCH A MEASURE IS ADOPTED IT WILL GET THE COUNTY THROUGH THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WITHOUT ADDITIONAL BLOODSHED. MPLA IS PREPARED IMMEDIATELY TO HAND OVER ALL ITS FORCES TO THE NEW ARMY.

3. NETO SAID THAT ELECTIONS WILL ALSO BE ON THE AGENDA AT THE SUMMIT. HE BELIEVES THAT AN EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO HOLD ELECTIONS, BUT THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DO SO AT THIS LATE DATE IN A NATION THAT HAS NEVER KNOWN AN ELECTION AND IN WHICH THERE EXISTS NO ADEQUATE GOVERNMENTAL OR PARTY MACHINERY.

4. I ASKED HIM ABOUT MPLA ELECTORAL STRENGTH THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND POINTED OUT THAT MOST OBSERVERS GIVE SAVIMBI OF UNITA A HEALTHY PLURALITY BECAUSE THE OVIMBUNDOS MAKE UP ALMOST FORTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. NETO REPLIED THAT THE OVIMBUNDOS ARE NOT SOLIDLY BEHIND SAVIMBI. THEIS MAY HAVE BEEN TRUE SIX MONTHS AGO, BUT MPLA HAS BEEN AT WORK AND NOW PREDOMINATES ALONG THE COAST FROM LUANDA TO MOCAMEDES AND ON INTO THE INTERIOR, WHERE ITS STRENGTH GRADUALLY DIMINISHES. IN THE DISTRICT OF HUAMBO, WHERE NOVA LISBOA IS LOCATED, ADDED NETO, MPLA AND UNITA ARE ABOUT EQUAL. UNITA IS STRONGER FURTHER INLAND. MPLA ALSO HAS A GOOD BIT OF SUPPORT IN SA DA BANDEIRA AND THE CUNENE REGION. ACCORDING TO NETO MPLA CAN COUNT ON SUPPORT IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS. FROM LUANDA MPLA PREDOMINATES EASTWARD AS FAR AS MALANGE. NETO PREDICTED THAT IF AN ELECTION IS HELD IN OCTOBER AS SCHEDULED, MPLA WILL COME OUT WITH MORE VOTES THAN EITHER OF THE OTHER TWO PARTIES BUT WILL FALL SHORT OF AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. WITH OR WITHOUT ELECTIONS, HE SAID, THERE WILL BE A COALITION GOVERNMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

5. I NEXT DESCRIBED THE U.S. POLICY OF IMPARTIALITY TOWARD THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN ANGOLA. I ALSO TOUCHED ON THE ALMOST UNIVERSAL, BUT ERRONEOUS, BELIEF HERE THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT GIVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE FNLA. I RESTATED HOLDEN ROBERTO'S COMPLAINT THAT HE HAS TO TAKE THE HEAT BECAUSE EVERYONE BELIEVES WE PAY HIM BUT HE GETS NO BENEFITS FROM SUCH A MAJOR LIABILITY. NETO REPLIED THAT THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS MOBUTU AND HIS DESIGNS ON ANGOLA. THE REAL TEST OF U.S. INTENTIONS, SAID NETO, WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHAT IT DOES IN CABINDA. MOBUTU WANTS TO CONTROL THE ENCLAVE, HE

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LUANDA 00570 01 OF 02 122223Z

ASSERTED, AND GULF OIL WOULD FEEL A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE IF CABINDA WERE UNDER THE WING OF THE ZAIRIANS. I TOLD HIM THAT AS FAR AS I KNEW GULF IS MAINTAINING A HANDS-OFF POLICY AND IS VERY CONCERNED LEST THE AUTHORITIES IN ANGOLA BELIEVE THE COMPANY IS TAKING SIDES. I GAVE NETO MY PERSONAL VIEW THAT A SEPARATE CABINDA WOULD MEAN BALKANIZATION AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE REGION AND THAT THE OIL REVENUES WOULD BE OF GREATER SOCIAL BENEFIT IF UTILIZED FOR ALL ANGOLANS AND NOT 80,000 CABINDANS. I DID NOT TALK ABOUT SELF-

DETERMINATION BECAUSE MOBUTU HAD ADVOCATED THAT POLICY FOR CABINDA ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE MY INTERVIEW WITH NETO. NETO SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ASSURANCES THAT WE ARE ACTING IN GOOD FAITH IN CABINDA.

I TOLD HIM WE ARE AND THAT WHILE I WAS IN WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK I WOULD MAKE IT A POINT TO RAISE HIS CONCERN. WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN UPON MY RETURN TO ANGOLA TO TALK FURTHER.

6. I ASKED NETO ABOUT THE BELIEF IN MANY CIRCLES THAT HE IS A MARXIST, A MEMBER OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) AND ANTI-AMERICAN. HE DOES NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF A MARXIST HE SAID, BECAUSE HE HAS NEVER READ ALL OF MARX. HE PREFERS TO CALL HIMSELF A PROGRESSIVE WHO TAKES A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO PROBLEMS. AS FOR THE PCP, HE WAS NEVER A MEMBER OF THE PARTY AS SUCH, BUT HE DID JOIN A YOUTH ORGANIZATION; THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR ANGOLAN INDEPENDENCE. HE IS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN BUT HE HAS NO USE FOR CURRENT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. HE HAS AMERICAN FRIENDS DATING BACK TO HIS YEARS IN THE EVANGELICAL MISSION (METHODIST) IN LUANDA. HE WAS NOT BADLY TREATED IN THE U.S. DURING HIS ONE TRIP THERE YEARS AGO, AS ONE STORY PUTS IT, AND HE HAS NO CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT AT THE PERSONAL LEVEL. WITH RESPECT TO THE MPLA AS AN ORGANIZATION, HE MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT, "THE MPLA IS NOT SO ANTI-AMERICAN THAT IT CANNOT SEE AND ADAPT TO REALITY." HE IMMEDIATELY REVISED THIS AND SAID THE MPLA IS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN, WANTS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WILL COOPERATE AS LONG AS ANGOLA'S SOVEREIGNTY AND ITS RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON ITS PERCEPTIONS OF ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE RESPECTED.

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 00570 02 OF 02 122228Z

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R 121410Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
CAPE TOWN 278

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 0570

7. WHAT NETO DOES OBJECT TO AT THE PERSONAL LEVEL, HE SAID, ARE THE STATEMENTS IN THE U.S. PRESS AND COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS OF CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS, WHICH HE DID NOT IDENTIFY, TO THE EFFECT THAT HE IS A MARXIST, A COMMUNIST AND A TOOL OF THE SOVIET UNION. HE SAID THE BRITISH HAVE ALSO BEEN ROUGH ON HIM IN THIS RESPECT. THE USSR HAS GIVEN A GOOD DEAL OF HELP TO THE MPLA, MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. THE LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE RUSSIANS BEGAN TO DROP IN 1970 AND ENDED IN 1972 WHEN THE USSR, ACCORDING TO NETO, LIMITED ITSELF TO HELPING THE CHIPENDA FACTION. IT WAS ONLY AFTER MPLA ARRIVED IN LUANDA LATE IN 1974 THAT THE SOVIETS RESUMED THEIR ASSISTANCE ON A MODEST SCALE. MPLA HAS ACCEPTED HELP FROM ALL AND HAS NEVER COMMITTED ITSELF IDEOLOGICALLY TO ANYONE. THE MPLA IS MOST EMPHATICALLY NOT, HE CONCLUDED, A PUPPET OF THE SOVIET UNION.

8. WE TALKED NEXT ABOUT THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT'S NEWLY ANNOUNCED ECONOMIC PROGRAM. NETO SAID THAT THE MPLA CONTRIBUTED THE LION'S SHARE OF THE WORK AND THAT THE DOCUMENTS REFLECT THE MPLA POINT OF VIEW. HE BELIEVES THE NEW POLICIES
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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00570 02 OF 02 122228Z

WILL CONTINUE IN FORCE FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND SHOULD SERVE AS DURABLE GUIDELINES FOR INVESTORS AND OTHERS. WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT, MAJORITY PARTICIPATION BY THE GOVERNMENT IN LARGE ENTERPRISES, RATHER THAN EXPROPRIATION, HAS BEEN THE INSTRUMENT CHOSEN TO SECURE PROPER UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES. THE ONLY AREA IN WHICH EXPROPRIATION WILL BE A KEY TOOL, HE SAID, IS IN LAND POLICY, WHERE THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT REDISTRIBUTION IS A MATTER OF URGENT PRIORITY.

9. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW, WHICH WILL BE ANGOLA'S PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION, NETO SAID THAT IT IS STILL NOT READY, BUT MAY BE IN SHAPE FOR FINAL APPROVAL IN A WEEK OR TWO. ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS HAS BEEN TO DEFINE THE PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH WHITES GAIN ANGOLAN CITIZENSHIP. MPLA FAVORS THE IMPOSITION OF QUALIFICATION TESTS - LENGTH OF RESIDENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, RATHER THAN A BLANKET AUTHORIZATION.

10. I ASKED FINALLY ABOUT DETENTE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. NETO DOES NOT SEE HOW IT CAN WORK; NOTHING FUNDAMENTAL HAS CHANGED

IN SOUTH AFRICA; APARTHEID IS STILL THE OFFICIAL POLICY.
DETENTE IS A CHIMERA AND AFTER ONE OR TWO YEARS OF NO PROGRESS
BLACK AFRICA WILL ONCE AGAIN BE SUPPORTING ARMED STRUGGLE.

11. NETO'S ASSESSMENT OF MPLA'S ELECTORAL STRENGTH DIFFERS
FROM FIGURES WE HAVE SENT IN. WE HAVE NOT IN THE PAST TRIED TO
GET INSIDE THE ETHNIC VOTE, THAT IS, TO ANALYZE HOW MANY OVIMBUNDOS
WOULD VOTE FOR MPLA. IT SEEMS TO BE A FACT THAT MPLA DOES HAVE
GOOD POTENTIAL ALONG THE COASTAL CITIES, BUT WHAT IS LESS
CERTAIN IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH MPLA CAN HOPE TO CUT INTO THE
UNITA POTENTIAL AROUND NOVA LISBOA. THIS IS THE MOST
HEAVILY POPULATED REGION OF THE COUNTRY AND ALL PARTIES ARE
WORKING TO WIN SUPPORTERS THERE. WE HAVE RECOUNTED ELSEWHERE
THE FNLA TACTIC OF BUYING LOCAL CHIEFS WITH MONEY AND PRESENTS AND
IT TO BE WITHOUT MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE. THE MPLA
CHALLENGE IS CERTAINLY MORE SERIOUS. I HAVE REPORTS THAT
MPLA IS MAKING INROADS AMONG THE OVIMBUNDOS IN URBAN
AREAS AND AMONG THE YOUNG, BUT THERE IS NO ACCURATE WAY
TO MEASURE PARTY PREFERENCE.

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